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TAGS: PREL UNSC UNMIK CH YI RS

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: CHINA FEARS PRECEDENT SET BY INDEPENDENCE,
SCHOLARS SAY

REF: STATE 37835

Classified By: Robert Griffiths, Political Section Deputy.
Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

¶1. (C) China fears the precedent that could be set by UN action granting supervised independence to Kosovo, according to Chinese scholars from a Ministry of State Security-affiliated think tank. UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari's plan to grant Kosovo independence without Serbian consent could someday have negative implications for China's own territorial integrity with respect to Taiwan, Tibet or Xinjiang, they say, as well as promoting instability in other regions where "frozen conflicts" persist. The scholars find proposals by UN Envoy Ahtisaari biased in favor of Kosovar Albanians and against Serbia. China seeks a stable resolution in Kosovo, but agrees that Kosovar violence could increase without any change in the status quo. China has not struck any deal with Russia to veto any UNSC resolution on Kosovo, they believe, because the Chinese government is still consulting to decide its position on Kosovo. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) China fears the precedent that could be set by UN action granting independence to Kosovo, according to Kosovo scholar Li Jun and Russian expert Wang Lijiu of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). China hesitates to support the Ahtisaari plan because of the precedent that UN action without Serbian consent might set for China's territorial integrity, especially with respect to Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang, the scholars told poloff March ¶30.

Seek Stability, Avoid Influence on Frozen Conflicts

¶3. (C) Chinese scholars also are concerned about the impact of Ahtisaari's plan on other "frozen conflicts" in the former Soviet Union, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Li and Wang told us separately. China's primary objective is that Kosovo's status be resolved in a stable way, Li said. MFA officials have been consulting with scholars recently on Kosovo and have concluded that Albanian violence in Kosovo will continue, and likely increase, if there is no change in the status quo. At the same time, if an independence plan were approved, Beijing believes Kosovo might not settle down, but rather become a haven for anti-Serb terrorism and a magnet re-inciting violence elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia, according to Li.

¶4. (C) China finds Ahtisaari's plan for supervised

independence for Kosovo biased in favor of Kosovar Albanians and against Serbia, Li said. Serbs feel they have already paid a high price and resist the further impact on their sovereignty of losing such a culturally and strategically important territory as Kosovo, he said. Poloff took opportunity, drawing on reftel points, to make clear that the United States supports the Ahtisaari plan.

China Values Russian Interests....

¶ 15. (C) China also attaches importance to Russian interests in the former Yugoslavia, Li said. Russia dislikes Ahtisaari's plan, the scholars said, and is very concerned about the impact of Kosovo's status on potential conflicts in "its own backyard." Russia is now calculating how to handle the Kosovo issue so as to strengthen its strategic interests, including energy and other global interests, Li suggested.

...But Has Struck No Deal on a UN Veto

¶ 16. (C) Russian expert Wang said Kosovo was not a major topic of Hu Jintao's March 27 meeting with Russian President Putin. The countries are aware of each other's interests and concerns about Kosovo, he said, and experts and officials consult about positions. But Wang found it unlikely that China struck any deal with Russia about vetoing UN resolutions on Kosovo, noting that the tenor of discussions between scholars and Chinese government officials he is aware of suggests that the Chinese Government has not yet finalized its position on Kosovo.

RANDT